

ACROSS SOUTH AMERICA

AN ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY FROM BUENOS
AIRES TO LIMA BY WAY OF POTOSÍ

WITH NOTES ON BRAZIL, ARGENTINA,
BOLIVIA, CHILE, AND PERU

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WITH EIGHTY ILLUSTRATIONS
AND MAPS



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see that the irrigation works, the foot-paths over the mountains, the suspension bridges over the raging torrents and *tambos* for the convenience of travelers, should all be kept in good condition. The gold-hunting Spanish *conquistadores*, on the other hand, had no interest in the servile Quichuas further than to secure their services as forced laborers in the mines. The modern Bolivianos have done little to improve their condition.

After seeing these two Indians meekly take such severe beatings, I found it easier to understand why Pizarro had been able to conquer the Empire of Peru with a handful of determined Spanish soldiers, and why the unfortunate Tupac Amaru could make so little headway in 1781 when he attempted to rouse the Indians to revolt against Spanish tyranny. Although he had sixty thousand men under him, the Spanish general easily defeated him with barely twenty thousand, of whom only a few hundred were Spaniards, the majority being friendly Indians.

How much the extremely severe conditions of life that prevail on this arid plateau have had to do in breaking the spirit of the race is a question. It is a generally accepted fact that a race who are dependent for their living on irrigating ditches, can easily be conquered. All that the invading army has to do is to destroy the dams, ruin the crops, and force the inhabitants to face starvation.

The Quichua shows few of the traits which we ordinarily connect with mountaineers. His country is too forlorn to give him an easy living or much time for thought. He is half starved nearly all the time.

His only comfort comes from chewing coca leaves. Coca is the plant from which we extract cocaine. It is said that the Quichua can go for days without food, provided he has a good supply of coca. It would be extremely interesting to determine the effect on his intelligence of this cocaine habit, which seems to be centuries old. If a man can stand up and take severe punishment for trivial offences without getting angry, showing vexation, or apparently without bearing any grudge against his oppressor, there must be something constitutionally wrong with him. I believe that the coca habit is answerable for a large part of this very unsatisfactory state of affairs. Coca has deadened his sensibilities to a degree that passes comprehension. It has made him stupid, willing to submit to almost any injury, lacking in all ambition, caring for almost none of the things which we consider the natural desires of the human heart.

In travelling through Bolivia and Peru, I found it repeatedly to be the case that the Quichua does not care to sell for money either food or lodging. Presents of coca leaves and tobacco are acceptable. A liberal offer of money rarely moves him, although it would be possible for him to purchase with it many articles of necessity or comfort in near-by towns. As a rule he prefers neither to rent his animal, nor sell you cheese or eggs, or anything else. The first Quichua words one learns, and the answer which one most commonly receives to all questions as to the existence of the necessaries of life, is "*mana canca*," "there is none."

smells, six-course dinners were prepared for our consumption. It was a miracle that we did not get every disease in the calendar.

Opposite the hotel was a fine old building with a wonderfully carved stone gateway and attractive iron balconies jutting out with stone supports from each second-story window. It is now the residence and warehouse of one of the largest importers in Bolivia. Once it was the abode of a Spanish marquis. The exquisitely finished exterior bears witness to the good taste of its builder and the riches and extravagance that once ran riot in Potosí.

So also do the beautiful towers, all that are left standing of the Jesuit church. The church itself has disappeared, but the solidly constructed, exquisitely carved stone towers remain as silent witnesses to the power of that Christian order that did most to advance the cause of civilization in South America.

Unquestionably the most picturesque part of Potosí is the market-place and the streets in its immediate vicinity. Hither come the miners and their families to spend their hard-earned wages. Here can be purchased all the native articles of luxury: coca, *chupe*, frozen potatoes, parched corn, and *chicha* (native hard cider made from anything that happens to be handy). The streets are lined with small merchants who stack their wares on the sidewalk against the walls of the buildings. There are no carriages and few horseback riders, so that one does not mind being crowded off the sidewalks by the picturesque booths of the Quichua merchants.

In the streets flocks of llamas driven by gayly-

dressed Indians add a rare flavor not easily forgotten. The llamas move noiselessly only making little grunts of private conversation among themselves; quite haughty, yet so timid withal, they are easily guided in droves of fifty by a couple of diminutive Indians.

To see these ridiculous animals stalking slowly along, looking inquisitively at everyone, continually reminded me of Oliver Herford's verses about that person in Boston who

“Looked about him with that air
Of supercilious despair
That very stuck-up people wear
At some society affair
When no one in their set is there.”

In the immediate vicinity of the market-place every available inch on each side of the street is used by the small tradesmen. They are allowed to erect canopies to protect their goods from the sun and rain, and the general effect is not unlike a street in Cairo. On one corner are piled up bolts of foreign cloth, their owners squatting on the sidewalk in front of them. On another corner, leaning against the white-washed walls of a building, is a native drug store. The different herbs and medicines exposed for sale in the little cloth bags are cleverly stacked up so as to show their contents without allowing the medicines to mix. The most conspicuous article offered for sale is coca, which is more to the Quichua than tobacco is to the rest of mankind.

The market-place itself is roughly paved with ir-

desolate as the region farther south, still it impresses one as being extremely inhospitable and unlikely ever to support a larger population.

In the evening of the second day we reached Ocurí, eighty miles from Sucre. Just outside the town we crossed a very swampy plain where cattle, horses, and pigs were feeding in treacherous bogs.

Ocurí is a brown little Indian town of perhaps two thousand inhabitants, with houses of sunburned brick and thatched roofs, lying high up on the side of a mountain whose peak shelters it somewhat from the easterly winds. It is higher than Potosí and has much the same cold, dismal climate. It likewise owes its existence to the presence of mines of silver and tin. There are several small smelters just outside the town. We could get nothing to eat in the *poste*, but a pleasant-faced mestiza woman who kept a sort of boarding-house near by, gave us a supper of beef-steak and fried eggs, a welcome change from the canned food which was our mainstay.

The principal street in the town was lined with small shops where a considerable variety of domestic and foreign merchandise was offered for sale. This does not mean that there were any attractive window displays but that when Mr. Smith felt brave enough to venture to step over the little Aymará brats and the fierce Bolivian dogs who were playing around the prostrate forms of drunken *arrieros*, he found hidden away in the dark recesses of dusty shops, quite a variety of articles. Cigarettes, onions, eggs, bread, canned salmon, sardines, home-made woollen ponchos, imported cotton cloth, candles,

cheap domestic pottery, straw hats, shoes, belts, gloves, and condensed milk. It is a very poor place indeed in Bolivia where one cannot buy a small can of Swiss condensed milk, the one thing that is generally good.

At Ocurí, we entered the country of the Aymarás for whom this is a kind of outpost town. Our first evidence of their being here was the fact that the *postillons* in the *tambo* unloaded our mules very carelessly, allowing the bags to fall with a crash to the ground. They seemed to think it a great joke to treat us as ignominiously as possible. From here to Oruro, La Paz, and Lake Titicaca the Aymarás are in full sway. They seem to be inserted like a wedge between the Quichuas of Peru and those of southern Bolivia.

The Quichuas are a mild and inoffensive folk, but the Aymarás, heavier in build, coarser featured, and more vigorous in general appearance, are brutally insolent in their manner and unruly in their behavior. We were even regaled with stories of their cannibalism on certain occasions, but unfortunately had no opportunity of proving the truth of such statements. Neither Quichuas nor Aymarás are at all thrifty, and we were everywhere impressed with their great poverty. Their clothing is generally the merest rags and their food is as meagre as can possibly be imagined. Coca and *chicha* (*i. e.*, cocaine and alcohol) seem to be beginning and end of life with them. We rarely ever saw one riding, although occasionally we met a *postillon* returning to his *poste* with a mule that had been placed in his charge.

can secure enough freight to pay expenses. There will always be a certain amount of passenger traffic, but at present one train, three times a week, is amply sufficient.

A branch of the Bolivia Railway is now in course of construction from Oruro to Cochabamba, which will bring to La Paz the food and coca cultivated in the warm valleys northeast of Sucre where frost is unknown and there is an abundance of rain. There is an imperative demand for coca all over the plateau where it cannot possibly grow. Furthermore it does not keep well, loses its flavor after four or five months, and fresh supplies have to be brought continually from the eastern valleys. This makes it an important article of commerce to be reckoned as one of the surest sources of revenue for the Bolivia Railway.

Shortly before reaching Viacha we passed a truncated hill, the Pan de Sucre, that has been a favorite camping-ground in revolutionary wars. It is easily defended and its summit is spacious enough to furnish refuge for quite a number of troops. On the hills west of it, romantically perched on an almost inaccessible peak, is a little church where services are held once a year. To the eastward we could begin to see the magnificent snow-range of the Bolivian Andes. Words fail to describe adequately the grandeur of the Cordillera Real with its two hundred and fifty miles of snow-capped mountains, scarcely one of which lies at a lesser elevation than twenty thousand feet. It must be seen to be appreciated. Still, one can get a very vivid

impression of it in the pages of Sir Martin Conway's fascinating "Climbing and Exploration in the Bolivian Andes."

The next day after my return from Oruro, through the courtesy of Mr. Rankin Johnson, I enjoyed the privilege of visiting the village and ruins of Tiahuanaco on the plains several miles south of Lake Titicaca.

Leaving La Paz at eight o'clock in the morning, we had six hours in and around the village and returned in time for dinner the same evening. It was necessary to take our lunch with us, for there is no inn and the little village shops afford scarcely anything that is fit to eat. The Tiahuanaco station is within a mile of the most interesting ruins. The railroad track passes within a few feet of three of the monolithic images and one of the monolithic doorways.

At the station we secured the services of a picturesquely dressed old Aymará who the station master assured us was a competent guide. He took us across the dusty plain towards a large mound which had once been surrounded by terraces and stone walls. It is popularly known as the "fortress." Originally a truncated pyramid about six hundred feet long, four hundred feet wide, and fifty feet high, treasure-seekers have dug great holes in its sides and excavated part of its summit in an effort to find the "buried riches of the Incas." Besides the fortress there seems to be evidence of a great "temple" and also of a "palace." The "temple," roughly outlined by rude stone blocks, occupies an area of